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MEMBER OF CONGRESS
14TH DISTRICT OF OHIO

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.
March 22, 2021

COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

Congratulations again on your election. I look forward to working with your administration to advance our shared bipartisan goals. I am contacting you with concerns regarding recent reports that your administration has forced individuals with prior cannabis use to resign from their positions after indicating such use would not be grounds for dismissal. It is my understanding that your administration has begun to remedy this matter and I appreciate your efforts in that regard.

As you are aware, numerous states and territories, including Washington, D.C., have exercised their state's right and enacted sensible cannabis reforms and legalization measures which have overturned decades-long policies that are both arcane and discriminatory. In fact, when used correctly and responsibly, cannabis has many proven health benefits, including the treatment of PTSD and serving as an opioid alternative to pain management. As our nation continues to grapple with an increased rate of PTSD amongst our veteran communities and a growing opioid crisis that has caused thousands of fatal overdoses amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we should be encouraging these therapies, not finding ways to further stigmatize and disenfranchise them.

Furthermore, aside from the obvious impact to the employees in question, I am also concerned about the message the federal government is sending by penalizing those who chose to be forthcoming and truthful. Simply put, in a nation where the truth is considered malleable, we need to demonstrate to our young public servants that telling the truth is an honorable trait, not one to be punished.

I respectfully request that your administration discontinue punishment of staff for being honest about their prior cannabis use and reinstate otherwise qualified individuals to their posts. Moving forward, I encourage your administration to focus its efforts within cannabis on establishing an effective federal regulatory framework which recognizes that continued cannabis prohibition is neither tenable nor the will of the American electorate. I stand ready and willing to work with you in this regard.

Sincerely,

David P. Joyce
Member of Congress